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ABSTRACT

This document presents an overview of the origin and administrative organization of Ghanaian higher education. Administrative organization is discussed in relation to the chancellor, pro-chancellor, vice-chancellor, and pro-vice chancellor's role and responsibility, registrar, chief fiscal officers, university council, academic boards, faculty organization, and faculty ranks. (MJM)

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An Overview of the Origin and Administrative Organization of Ghanaian Higher Education

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Monograph

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Ghana is centered in three universities, the University of Ghana, Legon; the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; and the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast. These institutions are public, supported by the Ghanaian Government. No private universities exist in Ghana.

While there are institutions in Ghana which are designated as colleges, they function more like junior colleges, as known by Americans, and are not regarded as a part of the higher education system. This concept also applies to vocational and technical schools.

ORIGIN

University of Ghana - The University of Ghana grew out of the University College of the Gold Coast, which was founded in 1948. Its inception stemmed from the Asquith Commission, a commission established in 1943 to investigate higher education in the then British Colonies. Among the Commission's significant recommendations was the setting up of university colleges in association with the University of London. This was followed by a number of separate commissions in different regions. One was the West African Commission, which functioned under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Honorable Walter Elliot. The Elliot Commission, as it was known, published a majority report which recommended the establishment of two university colleges in British West Africa, one in Ghana and one in Nigeria. A minority report was published which held that only one university college for the whole of British West Africa was feasible.

At first, the United Kingdom Government accepted the minority report of the Elliot Commission and decided that a university college for the whole of British West Africa should be established at Ibadan in Nigeria. The people of the Gold Coast resisted this decision. Led by the scholar and politician, the late Dr. J. B. Danquah, they urged the Gold Coast Government to inform the British Government that the Gold Coast could support a university college. Subsequently, the United Kingdom reviewed its decision and agreed to the establishment of the University College of the Gold Coast, now the University of Ghana.

The University College of the Gold Coast was founded by ordinance on August 11, 1948, "for the purpose of providing for and promoting university education, learning, and research."

The Asquith Commission recommended that the British Government should set up an Inter-University Council to advise on all matters relating to higher education in the British Colonies. This Council, reportedly, served the University College of the Gold Coast in an advisory capacity. However, all academic appointments were approved by the Council, a function which was looked upon as being helpful to the College in maintaining the high academic standards of the universities in Britain. Also, the College officials sought the support of the Council in their efforts to obtain funds from the United Kingdom Government.

From its inception, the University College of the Gold Coast was admitted to the scheme of special relationship extended by the University of London to certain English and overseas university colleges. Under this arrangement, the University College of the Gold Coast was permitted to offer instruction preparing for the external degree examinations of London University. However, the college was allowed to modify the London syllabi to accommodate local conditions and to participate in the making and setting of examinations. London University, nevertheless, gave final approval to courses and examinations, and the degrees awarded were those of London University.

In the early years in the life of the University College of the Gold Coast, the first thirteen, it was guided and controlled by two British institutions, the Inter-University Council for broad policy and the University of London for approval and control of details pertaining to degree regulations.

During the 1960-1961 academic year, a period which followed independence for Ghana, the University College of the Gold Coast, through its Council,

requested the Government of Ghana to enact legislation to convert the University College into a University with the power to award its own degrees. In response to this request, the government appointed an International Commission to examine the question and make recommendations. Thus, on the Commission's recommendations, the University of Ghana was established by an Act of Parliament October 1, 1961, with the then President of the Republic, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, as the first Chancellor of the University.

University of Science and Technology - This institution is an outgrowth of the Kumasi College of Technology which came into existence as a result of a Government Ordinance of October 6, 1951. The College opened officially on January 22, 1952, with two hundred students, teacher training students, who were transferred from Achimota to form the nucleus of the College.

During the Michaelmas Term of 1952, the School of Engineering and the Department of Commerce were established, and the first students to pursue courses in these areas were admitted. However, from 1952-1955, the School of Engineering prepared students for professional qualifications only. In 1955, the School embarked on a program of courses leading to the University of London's Bachelor of Engineering External Degree Examinations.

The College's offerings were expanded in 1953 by the addition of a Pharmacy Department in January of that year. Pharmacy was transferred from Korle Bu Hospital in Accra. The pharmacy course was structured for two years leading to the award ot the Pharmacy Board Certificate.

The College's program was also expanded in 1953 by the addition of a Department of Agriculture to provide a number of ad hoc courses of varying duration, from a few terms to three years, for the Ministry of Agriculture.

A Department of General Studies was instituted to prepare students for High School Certificate Examinations in both science and art subjects and to give instruction in such subjects as were requested by other departments.

The Kumasi College of Technology enjoyed very rapid growth. Thus, in 1957 the School of Agriculture, Town Planning and Building was inaugurated, and its first students were admitted in January, 1958, to pursue professional courses in agriculture, town planning and building.

Stemming from the College's rapid expansion, it was decided that the Kumasi College of Technology should be made a purely scientific and technological institution. Hence, in January, 1958, the Teacher Training College, with the exception of the Art School, was transferred to Winneba Training College. In further keeping with the view that the Kumasi College of Technology should become a purely scientific and technological institution, in 1959 the Commerce Department was transferred to Achimota to form the nucleus of the present School of Administration, Legon.

The Kumasi College of Technology's accession to university status began in 1960. In December of that year, the Ghanaian Government appointed a University Commission to advise it "on the future development of university education in Ghana in connection with a proposal to transform the University of Ghana and the Kumasi College of Technology into an interdependent University of Ghana."

Pursuant to the release of the Commission's report in early 1961, the government decided to establish two independent universities, one at Legon near

Accra and one at Kumasi. Thus, the Kumasi College of Science and Technology was transformed into a full fledged university by an Act of Parliment on August 22, 1961. It was named Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. It was officially inaugurated Wednesday, November 29, 1961, and started awarding its own degrees in June, 1964.

Since the Ghanaian Revolution of February 24, 1966, the name of the institution has been changed by deleting "Kwame Nkruwah," thus becoming the University of Science and Technology.

University of Cape Coast - This University is the youngest of the three universities which make up the university education system in Ghana. The University of Cape Coast owes its origin to the University College of Cape Coast. The University College resulted from the findings and recommendations of the Commission on University Education, which was appointed by the Ghanaian Government in December, 1960. Included in the Commission's report were recommendations for setting up a University College at Cape Coast. In this connection, the University College began operating in October, 1962, with the University of Ghana as the parent institution. The College was formally inaugurated December 15, 1962, under the name of the University College of Cape Coast, and therefore became the third university institution in Ghana.

The University College started in buildings it inherited from Osagyefo Teacher Training College. The housing capacity of the buildings was sufficient to accommodate approximately 155 students.

The primary purpose of the University College of Cape Coast was to produce graduate teachers in art and science subjects for secondary schools,

teacher training colleges, polytechnic and technical institutions in Ghana. The College began with two academic departments, the Department of Arts and the Department of Science. These departments developed into two faculties in the second year of the College's existence, 1963-1964. A third faculty, that of education, was instituted during the 1964-1965 academic year.

A move was made to gain university status during the 1969-1970 school year. Specifically, the Council of the University College of Cape Coast submitted a request to the Government of Ghana for legislation to transform the College into a University with the authority to award its own degrees, including honorary degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic distinctions. Hence, by an Act of Parliament on October 1, 1971, the University College of Cape Coast was privileged to the status of a full university with the designation, from that date, as the University of Cape Coast.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

General - At the top of the total administration, is the government, more specifically, the Head of State. Next in order is the National Council for Higher Education.

Chancellor - Each of the universities is headed by a Chancellor. By statute, the Chancellor of the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology is the Head of State. The Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast is elected, but his term in office cannot exceed five years. However, he is eligible for re-appointment for one further consecutive period in office subject to the same terms as the first.

The Chancellors do not function as administrative officers individually. In general, their duties may be described as ceremonial. However, the Chancellor of the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology does engage in policy and decision-making and in administrative activities because he, by virtue of office, is a member of both University Councils, which are policy and decision-making bodies. Also, the Chancellor presides over Council meeting when he is in attendance. While, then, the Chancellor of the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology does not perform administrative duties as an individual or on an individual basis, he does exercise such duties in concert with other members of the Councils of the two Universities.

By structure, the Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast is not a member of the University Council. It was reported, nevertheless, that he is privileged to attend Council meetings and to participate in its deliberations.

Pro-Chancellor - Only Cape Coast University has a Pro-Chancellor, he is second in command and by virtue of statute is Chairman of the University Council. He is appointed for two years but is eligible for re-appointment. In the absence of the Chancellor, he presides over ceremonies of the University. A review of the University structure suggests that, comparatively speaking, the Pro-Chancellor's duties are somewhat limited.

Vice Chancellors - Each of the three Universities has a Vice Chancellor. He is the second ranking officer at the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology, but the third ranking officer at the University of Cape Coast. Vice Chancellors are appointed, with the approval of the Chancellor, by the Council of the University they are to serve. They hold office in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the instrument of their appointments.

The Vice Chancellors serve their respective institutions as the academic and administrative heads and chief disciplinary officers. They are members of their respective University Councils by virtue of office.

The Vice Chancellors are generally responsible to their Councils for maintaining and promoting good order and efficiency of the institutions which they serve. They have the right and duty to advise their Councils and Academic Boards on all matters affecting policy, finance, government, and administration. For these purposes they have unrestricted rights of attendance and speech at all meetings of their Councils and other University bodies, whether executive or advisory, which are charged with consideration of matters pertaining to such interests as policy, finance, government, and administration.

Vice Chancellors, subject to the approval of the respective Council, are privileged to the power of delegating any of the functions assigned to them by statutes to senior members of the University as seem to them appropriate. They are responsible for the custody of the seal of the institution they serve and for affixing it to documents in accordance with directions given by their Councils and Academic Boards.

At the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology, in the absence of the Chancellor at ceremonial activities, the Vice Chancellors preside. At the University of Cape Coast, the Pro-Chancellor presides.

Pro-Vice Chancellor - A Pro-Vice Chancellor is elected at each of the three Universities. He is the third officer in rank at Legon and Kumasi and the fourth at Cape Coast. Pro-Vice Chancellors are elected through a process which requires the Vice Chancellor to submit to Convocation the names of three persons who hold professional status and academic rank. The Convocation elects two of the three and submits their names to the University Council for consideration and final action. Thus, the Council chooses one to be the Pro-Vice Chancellor.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor does not vacate his professional post nor administrative position, such as department head, providing he holds an administrative appointment. Should the Office of Pro-Vice Chancellor become vacant by reason of incapacity, death or some other cause, the Chairman of the Council appoints a professor to act as Pro-Vice Chancellor until the Council is able to make a formal appointment. Pro-Vice Chancellors may hold office for two years and are eligible for re-election for a further period of two years.

During a vacancy in the Office of the Vice Chancellor or the inability of the Vice Chancellor to perform the duties required of him because of illness or any other cause, the Pro-Vice Chancellor performs the duties of the Vice Chancellor.

Registrar - The Registrar is fourth in rank in the administrative structure of Legon and Kumasi and the fifth at Cape Coast. Registrars are appointed by the Councils of the University which they serve. However, by statute, they are responsible to the Vice Chancellor for General Administration and for providing secretarial services for the University Council, Academic Board and other such bodies and committees as may be prescribed by statutes.

The Registrar is responsible for a very broad area of administration throughout the total University operation. His responsibilities are executed through a network of assistants. Serving subordinate to him is a Deputy Registrar who has subordinate to him several assistant registrars. Assistant registrars are titled as, for example, Senior Assistant Registrar No. 1, Senior Assistant Registrar No. 2, Assistant Registrar No. 1, and Assistant Registrar No. 2. Assistant Registrars, of all ranks, are assigned specific areas of responsibility. For instance, at the University of Cape Coast the assistant registrars have assignments as described below.

1. Senior Assistant Registrar No. 1 - Publicity and Public Relations
2. Senior Assistant Registrar No. 2 - Personnel matters relating to senior and junior staff;
3. Assistant Registrar No. 1 - Academic matters relating to admissions and examinations;
4. Assistant Registrar No. 2 -Assistance to the Registrar;

5. Assistant Registrar No. 3 - Assistance to the Registrar on appointments and promotions of senior staff;

6. Assistant Registrar No. 4 - Assistance to the Assistant Registrar No. 1.

Chief Fiscal Officers - The Chief Fiscal Officers rank on the level of the Registrar and, like the Registrar, report directly to the Vice Chancellor.

Below the level of the Registrar and Chief Fiscal Officer, the reporting structure varies somewhat from University to University. However, it is not uncommon to find such officers as personnel, development, maintenance, etc. reporting to the Registrar.

University Council - There is a University Council in each of the three Universities. The Councils are the most powerful administrative and policy making organs in the Universities. The Councils are generally responsible for the control, management, and administration of funds which are at the disposal of their respective Universities. Moreover, all matters of high level policy and decision-making are channeled to the Councils for final action. In fact, the Councils are the governing bodies of the Universities.

Internally, with the exception of students, every area and segment of the Universities is represented on the Councils. Externally, representation is indeed diverse. The following are examples of the external council membership representation:

1. The National Council for Higher Education;

2. An individual from another African university which is not Ghanaian;

3. A person distinguished in university affairs from outside of Africa.

The Council Chairman is elected at the University of Ghana and the Univer-

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sity of Science and Technology. As noted previously, the Pro-Chancellor is Chairman of the Council at the University of Cape Coast by statute. It seems significant to note that although the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology have elected Council Chairmen, if the Chancellor, who is the head of State, is in attendance at a council meeting he presides.

Academic Boards - Following the University Councils, the Academic Boards at the University of Ghana and the University of Science and Technology and the Senate at the University of Cape Coast, which acts in the same capacity as the Boards, are the next most powerful policy and decision-making organs in the Universities. These bodies, subject to the functions and powers of the Councils, exercise complete authority over the academic programs in their respective institutions. They are charged with the responsibility of establishing educational policy and generally regulating the academic work in both teaching and research. As in the case of the Councils, there is broad membership representation on the Academic Boards at Legon and Kumasi and the Senate at Cape Coast. Also, as with the Councils, no provisions seem to exist which permit student participation.

The Academic Boards at Legon and Kumasi and the Senate at Cape Coast report to their respective Councils.

In each of the Universities, a committee system exists. Thus, a number of committees, addressing varied areas of institutional operation, are in vogue on each campus. Ultimately, the results of the work of committees feed into the Academic Boards (Senate at Cape Coast) and/or the University Councils.

Faculty Organization - Faculty members are not regarded as a single faculty of an institution. On the contrary, they are regarded as the faculty of a

particular area or discipline; thus, they are regarded as several faculties. For example, faculty members are classed as follows: (1) the faculty of arts, (2) the faculty of architecture, (3) the faculty of science, (4) the faculty of law, the faculty of education, etc. When appropriate, faculties are further compartmentalized into departments.

Faculty Ranks - Faculty ranks are five in number. They are, from the lowest to the highest, (1) Assistant Lecturer, (2) Lecturer, (3) Senior Lecturer, (4) Associate Professor, and (5) Professor.

Promotion policies are not clear to the writer. Nevertheless, information available seems to indicate, without equivocation, that promotions are based, in a large measure, upon an unquestioned demonstration of competence in one's chosen field of specialization. It is also clear that research and publications are essential ingredients in the promotion process.

SUMMARY

As compared with Western and European societies, Ghanaian higher education is very young. Nevertheless, the Ghanaian people are fully cognizant of the value of a strong system of higher education, and there is evidence that they are constantly working to up-grade and strengthen their total system of education, giving due consideration and attention to higher education. The work of the International Commission, the National Council for Higher Education, and the Dzobo Committee which published The New Structure and Content of Education for Ghana in February, 1974, attest to the Ghanaians' interest in providing a viable system of education for the Ghanaian people. Moreoever, in dialogue with educational administrators, faculty members, and students, the writer detected a common denominator of interest and concern among these groups. First, they are very serious about the style and quality of education made available to the Ghanaian people. Second, a high quality of education which emphasizes African culture is recognized as essential to an early realization of the goals which Ghana has set for its emergence as a developing country.

The structure of the Ghanaian system of education clearly favors the intellectually talented or elite. Only those who are successful on examinations at various stages of their academic life are permitted to pursue advanced educational experiences. Many of those who are successful on their examinations are fenced out of upward educational mobility opportunities. For instance, it was

reported to the writer that the University of Science and Technology accepts only about twenty percent of the applicants who qualify for admission. In 1973-1974, for exa nple, 4,000 students applied for admission; 3,000 qualified for admission, but only 600 were admitted. It was also reported that the University of Cape Coast rejects about two-thirds of the qualified applicants.

Of course, to an American, an educational system which precludes upward mobility educational opportunities for all, on an equal basis, might appear to be harsh. In this regard, without any attempt to defend the Ghanaian system, one might ask if a country with limited resources, comparatively speaking, can afford to chance its educational resources at the higher educational level on students who have not demonstrated a high level of potential for success.

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